

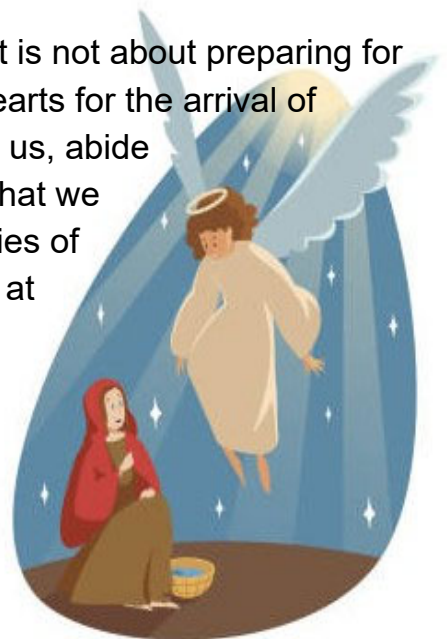
I love what December brings -- festivities, anticipation, gifts, twinkling lights, the smell of pine. Sometimes I even love popular Christmas music before Christmas! And, I confess, there is even something attractive about the shopping, the sales, and the guy in the red suit. All of it touches on something within that recognizes all is not right with the world. I think what I see in myself is what we all experience. With longer days, colder weather, and reminders of loved ones no longer with us, we will welcome anything that promises hope, love, joy, and peace.

Of course, we in the church have learned that none of the festivities or the lights or even the Christmas traditions can provide the lasting joy and hope for which we long. The only one who can satisfy the longings of our hearts is the one about whom we sing, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." Knowing this, it often becomes easy to turn our wagging finger at the commercials on television, the cheesy "Christmas" movies, those who remove the "Christ" out of "Christmas", or whoever might receive the target of our criticisms. (Incidentally, "X" is actually the Greek letter pronounced "Chi" and is the first letter in the Greek word "Christ." The early church used "X" as shorthand for "Christ" -- hence "Xmas"!)

We do well to remember, though, that at the root of all the commercialization of Christmas is the hunger and longing for Jesus Christ. Without Christ, our hearts grow restless and we will go anywhere to find hope, love, joy, and peace. Even we Christians settle for something less than our Lord to satisfy our souls.

This is why I am grateful for Advent. The season of Advent is not about preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ per se, but about preparing our hearts for the arrival of Jesus Christ. It is the season in which we pray "O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel," because only he can give what we need. Knowing Christ actually frees us to enjoy the festivities of the season and perhaps even find a glimpse of our Savior at work, even in the frivolity and fa-la-la-la-las.

Grace and Peace,
Dave



Books for the Season

The longer nights and colder demand a good book by the fireplace. Or perhaps you need to find a gift for a reader. Here are some of my personal favorites from 2020.

For the depressed, the dried up soul, or the sinner: *Gentle & Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Gavin Ortlund). If you have ever wondered what God thinks of you, this is a good place to start. It will change your life.

For the history lover: *From Christ to Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the Church in Less Than a Century* (James R. Edwards). If you've ever wondered how a small movement of Galilean peasants became a world-wide movement, this is a great place to start.

For the foodie: *The Soul of Wine: Savoring the Goodness of God* (Gisela H. Kreglinger). Discover how food -- especially wine -- is one of the good gifts of God and can aid us in deepening our relationship with him.

For the prayer novice or the prayer expert: *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (Tim Keller). Everything by Tim Keller is worth reading. Here he provides wise guidance on everything from understanding prayer to learning to pray to deepening prayer.

For current trends: *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Carl Trueman). If you want to understand contemporary culture conflicts, this is a must read. It is the most difficult on this list, but perhaps the most important.

For the novel reader: *Island of the World* (Michael O'Brien). Not only will you have a hard time putting this novel down, but you will want to be a better person after reading it.

-- Your Book-Addicted Pastor

Preaching Notes

With the arrival of Advent, we start anew in the church-year cycle. The Lectionary, as it does each year, turns our attention to passages to prepare for the Lord Jesus in our lives. The shorter days and long nights can make us drowsy (at best) or depressed (at worst), but these texts seek to wake us up to Christ's work in the world.

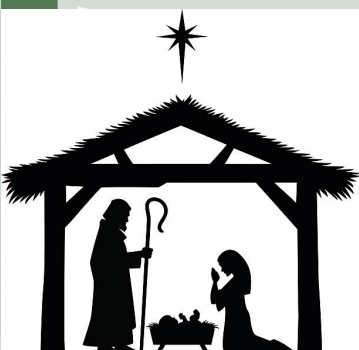
(The passages below in parenthesis are other assigned Lectionary texts that shed further light on the main passage.)

Dec. 5 Luke 3:1-6

Dec. 12 Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 19 Luke 1:39-55

Dec. 26 Luke 2:41-52



Summary of Session meeting of November 15, 2021


For its time of reflection, Session reviewed Ephesians 1: 15 - 23. This passage is full of encouragement. Verse 17 states, "I keep asking that God...may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."

Session is recommending to the congregation that they vote a 2.5% effective pay increase for Pastor David for 2022. This will happen at the meeting of the congregation after worship on Sunday, December 5.

Session voted to approved 2.5% pay raises for 2022 for all other church staff.

Session is working on the 2022 annual budget. This process will be finalized at the December meeting of Session.

November Financials

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
INCOME	\$252,778.53	\$352, 802.46
EXPENSE	\$352,223.79	\$352, 802.48
INC/EXP	(99,445.26)	(.02)
Betty Miller Adjustment	Of \$71380.46 (28064.80)	

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

If you are wanting to do a special offering to Christmas Joy the giving envelopes and reading information are on the back table in the Narthex.

~Merry Christmas~



December 2021

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

ABS- Adult Bible Study KK-Kingdom Kids SS-Sunday School SW-Sunday Worship			1	2 10am ABS	3 7am Grumpy's 7pm Al Anon	4
5 10am SW & Communion	6	7	8	9 10am ABS	10 7am Grumpy's 7pm Al Anon	11 7am 2nd Sat
12 10am SW & SS	13	14	15 KK Concert 6:30 pm	16 10am ABS	17 7am Grumpy's 7pm Al Anon	18
19 10am SW & SS	20 6:30 pm Session	21	22	23 10am ABS	24 7pm Service 7pm Al Anon	25 Merry Christmas
26 10am SW & SS	27 6 pm Deacons	28	29	30 10am ABS	31 7pm Al Anon	

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Lloyd Wallis (03) Maxie Boyer (07) Rachel Harder (12) Deborah Molohon (13)
Jennifer Babino (15) Mason Hurlbart (16) Bruce Devereaux (17)
Karen Hopkins (17) Bill Hopkins (24) Ellen Profit (30) Barb Myklebust (31)

